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P R E S S A N D P O L I T I C S

A study of Elections and Political
Issues in Tasmania from 1856, when
Self Government came into effect,
to 1871.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note on sources and methods	page	i
Map : Location of Electorates		iii
Polling places in Electorates		iv
Bibliography		vi
Chapter 1 : The Adoption of Representative Government		1
Chapter 2 : The Election of 1856		18
Chapter 3 : The First Parliament, 1856-61		65
Chapter 4 : The 1861 Election		97
Chapter 5 : The Chapman Ministry, 1861-3		148
Chapter 6 : The Election of 1862		167
Chapter 7 : C.J. Whyte's Ministry, 1863-66		196
Chapter 8 : The Election of 1866		221
Chapter 9 : The Ministries of Dry and Wilson, 1866-71		265
Conclusion		304
Appendix A : Tasmanian Statistics, 1855-82		318
Appendix B : Registered voters and male adults, 1856-70		319
Appendix C : Population of Electorates, 1857-1881		320
Appendix D : Prominent Tasmanian Members of Parliament		322
Appendix E : Tasmanian Ministries, 1856-72		331

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Note on Sources and Method

A study of elections in this period limits the writer almost exclusively to newspapers for his source material. There is no alternative way of gathering information. The influence of the Press upon politics has been assessed variously, but especially in the period under review was it important, for the Press was the only means that many settlers had of learning of Parliamentary business.

Because of the number of newspapers that was published in Tasmania, it has not been found necessary to trust to any single paper's account of the news. Except for a short period there was always one paper in Hobart Town which was radical in character and opposed to The Mercury, the chief newspaper of the South by 1860.

In addition, the student's task in evaluating the political happenings and elections is made easier by the amazingly comprehensive account of elections and proceedings of the Legislature. In many cases, candidates' policy speeches were reported verbatim, as were speeches from the floor of the House of Assembly.

Why did the newspapers of the day deal so exhaustively with Colonial politics. This question could give rise to much interesting speculation, but the question is not one of why reporting was so complete a hundred years ago, but rather why

present day political reporting is so inadequate. That, however, is a subject outside the scope of this analysis. But doubtless the fact that a number of newspaper proprietors were Members of Parliament meant that Parliamentary proceedings would receive a great deal of attention.

The method adopted in studying the political issues and elections of the day has been to read the often conflicting accounts of elections and deliberations of Parliament, and attempt to determine from them the truth, taking into account the unconcealed bias of the papers. The extraordinarily lengthy Editorials furnish more than ample material for estimating the characteristics of the newspapers and the extent of influence on the public.

The policy of Parliamentary candidates has been assessed from their policy addresses published in the newspapers, accounts of electioneering meetings, letters to the Press and from often outspoken Editorial comment on both measures and men.

Too little study of "ballot behaviour", as it has come to be called, has been made in Australia. It is to be trusted that this work will demonstrate the value of election analysis, from the social, as well as the political and historical points of view.

T A S M A N I A

Location of Electorates in 1856

Note : It has been impossible to determine the exact position of some of the electoral boundaries.

Polling Places in Electorates

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Hobart Town | - New Market Place
Old Market Place
St George's Hill, near the Church
Davey Street, near Antill Street
Harrington Street, near Warwick Street
Goulbourn Street, near St John's Church
Argyle Street, near Warwick Street
Murray Street, near Liverpool Street. |
| Queenborough | - Kingson
Sandy Bay, near the second milestone
Cascade Road, near the reservoir. |
| Glenorchy | - Glenorchy, near the seventh milestone
The race-course at New Town
Colville Street, near the New Town Road. |
| Kingborough | - Kingston
Oyster Cove
Kelly's Point, North Brunie
Three Hut Point
Lovett, Port Cygnet
Victoria. |
| Franklin | - Franklin
Dover, Port Esperance. |
| New Norfolk | - Court House, New Norfolk
Styx Bridge. |
| Cumberland | - Bothwell
Hamilton
Ouse Bridge
Woolpack Inn, Macquarie Plains. |
| Oatlands | - Oatlands
Jericho
Antill Ponds. |
| Brighton | - Kempton
Pontville. |
| Richmond | - Richmond. |
| Clarence | - Bellerive
Rokeby. |

Polling Places in Electorates (cont).BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bicheno. The struggle for self government in Tasmania.
Glen Gulet. 1911-12; Robert, 1931.
- Campbell Town - Campbell Town. History of Tasmania. 1884.
Ross
Clarke, C. Cleveland. Participation in Tasmania. 1911.
Robert, 1931.
- Fingal - Fingal
Avoca. Victoria's Tasmanian colonies.
Cullenswood
Falmouth. Tasmania's statistics.
- Morven - Evandale. Legislative Council of Tasmania. 1911.
Upper Mile Bridge. Tasmania's statistics, 1911 and 1912.
Lower Mile Bridge.
- Selby - Mulgrave Square
Hadspen. Tasmania's statistics.
Patterson's Plains, near the Church
Coulson's, in the parish of Wareham.
Cimitiere Point, in the parish of St Michael's.
The Tasmanian colonies.
- Norfolk Plains - Longford.
The Tasmanian colonies.
- Ringwood - Cressy, near the bridge
Over Brumby's Rivulet
Campbell Town.
- George Town - George Town.
- Launceston - St John's Square
The Market Place
St George's Square
The Court House.
- Westbury - Westbury.
- Deloraine - Deloraine.
- Devon - Torquay
Burnie, Emu Bay
Stanley.

Note - The names of the polling places are given in the order in which they appear in the list.